

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

13 September 2023



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Proposals for a Pedestrian Crossing – Upper Redlands Road
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	James Turner, Senior Transport Planner
Lead Councillor	Cllr John Ennis
Ward(s)	Redlands
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Sub-Committee notes the content of this report.2. That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake statutory consultation/notification processes for the proposed zebra crossing designs on Upper Redlands Road, in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.3. That the Highways and Traffic Services Manager, in agreement with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, be able to make minor alterations to the agreed proposals.4. That subject to no objections being received the scheme be considered as agreed for implementation enabling delivery planning to commence.5. That should a scheme receive objection(s) during the statutory consultation period, that these be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee for consideration and decision regarding scheme implementation.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. In January 2023 Local Authorities were invited to submit bids for Active Travel Fund 4, a capital funding opportunity to support uptake of everyday trips that builds on the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 and 3 schemes already being delivered. Funding was made available in the 2022/2023 financial year, to support delivery of infrastructure that enables walking, wheeling and cycling. Reading was awarded an indicative allocation of £558,790 and authorities were encouraged to bid for funding up to three times their indicative allocation.
- 1.2. Transport Officer put together a bid containing three schemes as follows:
 - Sidmouth Street – Queens Road Junction Cycle and Pedestrian Connectivity
 - Upper Redlands Road – Pedestrian Crossing
 - Christchurch Green Junction – Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements (scheme development)
- 1.3. On review and assessment of LA bids Active Travel England responded to LAs with an award and Reading was awarded funding for the delivery of the pedestrian crossing at Upper Redlands Road to the value of £75,000.

- 1.4. Within the same award letter, the Council received an additional award £1m to support the delivery of our Active Travel 3 scheme on Bath Road.
- 1.5. This report seeks approval for officers to undertake statutory consultation/notice processes necessary to progress this scheme.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The proposals align with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The zebra crossing proposals will complement the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by removing barriers to the greater use of sustainable, healthy transport options.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. This scheme would deliver a pedestrian crossing on Upper Redlands Road and is jointly promoted by the Council, St Joseph's College and University of Reading. There is no safe place for children, university students or local residents to cross Upper Redlands Road. This scheme would provide safer routes for children to walk to school as well as linking to the university via Elmhurst Road to our ATF2 scheme on the Shinfield Road as well as our ATF4 Development scheme at Christchurch Green.
- 3.2. Following discussion with Ward Councillors, officers have commissioned an independent Road Safety Audit (RSA) for this scheme, using the proposals contained in Appendix 1. Subject to the findings and any necessary adjustments, which are not expected, it is recommended that Officers undertake the required statutory consultations for these two proposed schemes.
- 3.3. Should there be any objections received during the statutory consultation periods, Officers will report this feedback to a future Sub-Committee meeting where it may be considered before a decision is made regarding the delivery (or otherwise) of the advertised scheme.
- 3.4. Should no objections be received, it is recommended that the scheme(s) be considered as approved for delivery. Delivery planning may then commence, and this will be communicated to Ward Councillors.
- 3.5. It is recommended that the Highways & Traffic Services Manager, in agreement with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, be able to make minor alterations to the agreed proposals. These may be necessary, depending on the outcome of the Road Safety Audits or due to unforeseen engineering reasons upon appointment of the scheme delivery contractors.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. This proposal contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan Themes, as set out below:

Healthy environment

The installation of zebra crossings is expected to improve the experience of pedestrians in the area. They reinforce the spirit of the revised Highway Code in providing priority for pedestrians and require motorists and pedestrians to be more observant of their surroundings. Reductions in traffic speed and the potential reductions in cut-through traffic volumes as a result of traffic calming can lead to a nicer environment for cycling.

Complementing other Council initiatives, these measures will contribute to encouraging people to make healthy transport choices through the removal of barriers toward doing so. This will contribute toward the Council's goal of making the town carbon neutral by 2030, through reducing emissions by private vehicle use.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. A Climate Impact Assessment has been conducted, which considers a net 'NIL' impact as a result of the Sub-Committee agreeing to the recommendations of this report.
- 5.3. The implementation of this scheme, if agreed, will require a level of civil engineering work to be undertaken and the installation of electrically powered lighting for zebra crossings.
- 5.4. These will have a minor negative impact during installation and a very minor ongoing negative impact due to the continued energy use by the low-energy LED zebra crossing lighting. They will, however, be long-standing facilities and it is expected that the installation of these schemes will remove barriers that many people will have to walking and cycling, which will offset these impacts by a likely reduction in private vehicle journeys. While it is difficult to quantify, it is expected that the benefits will outweigh the impacts over time.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Ward Councillors and the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport have been provided with briefing notes for the officer recommendations and have engaged in discussions with officers to arrive at schemes that are agreed in principle. This has also provided an opportunity for comment and local informal consultation.
- 6.2. Statutory notifications/consultation required for the proposed zebra crossings and traffic calming measures will be conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation. Notices of intention will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected area. The Police are a statutory consultee and will be directly notified. The consultation will be hosted on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'), where details and plans will be available, and feedback (support or objection) can be submitted.
- 6.3. Policy Committee and Traffic Management Sub-Committee are public meetings. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2. It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics, nor do they significantly vary existing operations. Statutory consultation processes will be conducted, where required, providing an opportunity for objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. None

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. Notice will be given for the implementation of zebra crossings under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 9.2. This report seeks agreement for the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to undertake this process.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The Council has been awarded £75,000 from Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 funding allocation issued through a Capital Grant.
- 10.2. A local contribution of £8,500 has also been made in private pledges from St Joseph's College, Upper Redlands Road.
- 10.3. This gives an overall budget for this scheme of £83,500.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. Subject to approval being granted by this committee the statutory consultation will commence shortly with the intention of reporting back to either the November 2023 or January 2024 Traffic Mgt Sub-Committee.
- 11.2. Subject to approval the installation of the new zebra crossing on Upper Redlands Road is expected to be complete by the end of March 2024.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. None.

Appendices

1. **Upper Redlands Road Ped Crossing Scheme Design**

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

1. Revenue Implications

Use this Table in the report or as an Appendix to set out the revenue implications:

	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Employee costs (see note1) Other running costs Capital financings costs	NIL	NIL	NIL
Expenditure	NIL	NIL	NIL
Income from: Fees and charges (see note2) Grant funding (specify) Other income	NIL	NIL	NIL
Total Income	NIL	NIL	NIL
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	NIL	NIL	NIL

The net cost of the proposal can be funded from (specify service and approved cost centre budget).

Note 1: Specifying any one off early retirement and redundancy costs. With regard to early retirement costs set out capitalised pension cost and pay back period in a separate paragraph.

Note 2: In a separate table/appendix set out detailed fees and charges proposals and sensitivity analysis.

2. Capital Implications

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Proposed Capital Expenditure	£83,500	NIL	NIL
Funded by Grant (Active Travel Tranche 4 Award) Section 106 (specify) Other services Capital Receipts/Borrowing Other (private pledges from St Joseph's College)	£75,000 £8,500	NIL	NIL
Total Funding	£83,500	NIL	NIL

Note: where more than one option /proposal is being made it may be easier to set out the above information in an Appendix.

3. Value for Money (VFM)

Officers consider that the recommended proposals within this report offer the best outcomes based on the funding available and the purpose to which it has been allocated. It is not considered that modest levels of additional funding would deliver schemes that offer significantly greater benefits against the purposes to which the funding has been allocated.

The schemes have been investigated and designed by officers of Reading Borough Council and all civil engineering work will be undertaken by the Council's in-house delivery team. The exceptions will be specialisms that currently lay outside of the Council's resources, such as lining implementation, sign creation and the supply, installation and electrical connection of the zebra crossing beacons. However, these will be appointed through existing contracts and using contractors that conduct these works to a scale that provides value for money through their chargeable rates.

Road Safety Audits have been outsourced to a contractor with these specialisms, but also provide an independent perspective and professional, constructive scrutiny of the scheme designs, which can assist in defending potential challenges.

4. Risk Assessment.

There will always be an element of financial risk regarding more complex works that require excavation and adjustment to the Highway layout. These risks should be minimised pre-excitation, as officer investigations have included colleagues from the delivery team. However, there is always a risk of unforeseen engineering challenges, even following the receipt of utility plans. It is beneficial that the majority of the civil engineering work is being conducted by Reading Borough Council, as this ensures close communication and true joint working throughout delivery.